

House Republican Press Release

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Representative Frey: New Legislation Allows State Consumers To Freeze Their Credit Information



State Rep. John H. Frey, R-Ridgefield, said today that beginning January 1, 2006, new legislation allows Connecticut residents to place a freeze on their credit information as a step toward preventing identity theft. Connecticut now joins several other states that authorize the credit freeze. Rep. Frey, who cosponsored the legislation, noted identity theft, along with theft of a person's credit data are among the fastest growing crimes in America.

The legislation, Public Act 05-148, allows a consumer to inform the three credit agencies in writing to freeze his or her credit report. It also requires businesses such as banks or credit card companies to inform affected consumers if there has been a security breach involving their computerized personal information.

"People are understandably concerned about the harm that could accompany an illegal breach of their credit data," said Rep. Frey. "Fortunately, Connecticut consumers will now have an avenue that can help minimize the damage if such an event occurs."

The law prohibits a credit rating agency from releasing a frozen credit report, or any information in it, without the consumer's express authorization. It requires an agency to freeze a report in five business days. The law creates a means by which a consumer can release his report, permanently, temporarily, or to a specific third party. It allows agencies to charge a consumer up to \$10 for each freeze or removal and up to \$12 for a temporary removal for a specific third party.

The law requires a business that has suffered a security breach involving personal information to disclose it to affected consumers, generally without unreasonable delay. It generally requires the notice to be given in writing, by telephone or electronically.